



NEWS

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Ordinance will reduce particulate and toxic pollution

Palo Alto Adopts Wood Burning Ordinance

At its May 22nd meeting, the City Council of Palo Alto unanimously voted to adopt an ordinance that will require cleaner burning fireplaces in new homes and renovations of existing homes that involve a fireplace. Under the ordinance, residents may install EPA certified wood stoves or fireplace inserts, pellet stoves or natural gas units which will reduce the amount of particulate matter by 75 to 90 percent compared to a standard fireplace.

The wood-burning ordinance was patterned after a model wood smoke ordinance developed by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District) and distributed to cities and counties in the Bay Area. The Air District is concerned about wood smoke because it is a major source of pollution in the winter months, accounting for 40 percent of the particulate matter in the air. In addition, wood smoke generates carbon monoxide and toxic pollutants, including dioxin.

"The Air District applauds the City of Palo Alto's decision to reduce dirty air in its community," said Ellen Garvey, the Air District's Executive Officer. "Soot from wood burning is a serious health threat. The ordinance will result in positive health benefits for the residents of Palo Alto. We encourage other cities and counties in the region to follow Palo Alto's lead."

An ordinance similar to the Palo Alto ordinance has been in place in Petaluma and Los Gatos since 1992.

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